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SUBJECT: UNSC/DARFUR: SPECIAL ENVOY ELIASSON TELLS COUNCIL
TO SET HIGH MARKERS FOR POLITICAL PROCESS

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. In back-to-back meetings with Ambassador Khalilzad and with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Permanent Five Members on May 17, UN Special Envoy (SE) for Sudan Jan Eliasson recommended the Council set high markers for all parties to the Darfur peace process to help move along the three-track approach he outlined in his "roadmap": convergence of initiatives to consolidate the positions of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatory movements, pre-negotiations and, finally, invitation to formal talks. Eliasson suggested the Council speak with one voice in urging movements to prepare for negotiations, reminding Sudan's neighbors to abide by their April 29 Tripoli commitments, and calling on the Government of National Unity (GNU) stop aerial bombardments and listen to "reasonable requests" from DPA non-signatories. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) In May 17 meetings with Ambassador Khalilzad and then with the UNSC P5 Members, SE Eliasson emphasized that for Darfur peacekeeping to succeed, there must be a peace to keep. He described his and African Union SE Salim's efforts to convince parties to the Darfur conflict that there was no military solution but acknowledged that a faction of the GNU still held out hope for such an outcome. Eliasson reported he had urged the GNU to refrain from aerial bombardments, which it had done between February 11 and April 19, a lull that needed to be sustained for the political process to begin. Eliasson believed that GNU fears about the threat Darfur instability posed to Sudanese cohesion and to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement were enough to keep Khartoum from pursuing military victory in Darfur. Eliasson believed President Bashir favored the political process but, like the international community, was not open to re-negotiating the DPA, just to amending it as needed.

¶3. (SBU) According to Eliasson, the non-signatory movements were too politically and ideologically splintered ever to unite (he counted at least 12-14 factions at this point). The international community's best hope was to consolidate their positions. He said the movements did however share three basic demands they considered unaddressed by the DPA: power-sharing, including a unified Darfur region and a

Darfurian vice-presidential slot; wealth-sharing, including more money to the Darfur compensation fund; and security issues, namely janjaweed-free returns for displaced populations. Eliasson noted the logistical challenges he faced in physically accessing the rebel movements and agreed that the rainy season in the region would further complicate the situation and delay the political process.

¶4. (SBU) Eliasson envisioned a three-stage political process, as outlined in the "roadmap" he and Salim drafted for the Secretary-General. Stage One was the convergence of

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initiatives to consolidate the rebel movements, to occur in the coming weeks. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) had credibility with the rebel group the Sudan Liberation Army and with "mediator" Eritrea, and GNU First Vice President Salva Kiir made clear the SPLM's intention to play a role in consolidating movements. Eliasson reported the UN's intention to assist the SPLM in convening a meeting of non-signatories in Juba. Eliasson noted the efforts of Egypt, Libya, Chad and Eritrea, as well as by the Community of Sant'Egidio, to gather non-signatories but warned there was too much competition between initiatives. He called upon the P5 to use its influence to ensure Phase One success, including by reminding regional players of their commitments made on April 29 in Tripoli to allow the UN and AU to coordinate all initiatives.

¶5. (SBU) Eliasson's Phase Two was the pre-negotiation phase, involving shuttle diplomacy and significant resources (NOTE: Eliasson met with the SYG after the P5 meeting to request this type of support. END NOTE), to take place in June. Eliasson requested P5 assistance in urging the non-signatories to accelerate their preparation for eventual negotiations with the GNU. He recommended allowing three to four weeks for this process in order to prevent movements' resorting to "maximalist" positions or possibly to confrontation.

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¶6. (SBU) The third and final phase was that of invitation to and conduct of negotiation, envisioned for July. Eliasson requested P5 assistance to his and Salim's efforts to make this stage the priority by setting high benchmarks for the movements and the GNU to make good-faith efforts at negotiation. In response to a suggestion by Ambassador Khalilzad that the parties be brought together to hash out their differences, Eliasson recommended first strengthening the negotiating teams from both sides and allowing Eliasson and Salim to "massage" them. Eliasson said he did not mind the "sanctions drum beating in the background" to keep the political process moving forward, but he cautioned that a "serious chance" existed with the parties to move forward.

¶7. (SBU) In addition to delays posed by the advent of the rainy season, Eliasson pointed out three other possible obstacles to the peace process. First was the potential explosion of new tribal fighting, whose impact he described as eclipsing that of rebel and GNU violence. Second was the "radicalization" and militarization of refugee and IDP camps, and finally was desertification, which Eliasson saw as resulting in the loss of eight to ten kilometers of land in the region per year.

¶8. (SBU) Members welcomed Eliasson's roadmap and expressed readiness to assist his efforts. Chinese Deputy PermRep Liu hoped for political progress during the summer, going so far as to specify his wish that the situation be resolved by the start of the General Assembly in September.

KHALILZAD